

ABOUT CHILE.

A Glance at Some of the National Features of the Republic.

BY CLEMENT CARPENTIER.



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It was a beautiful morning in early October—the Springtime of the far South—when I first saw the bay of Valparaiso. The view was strikingly similar to that of Genoa from the Mediterranean; indeed, Valparaiso might very properly be called the Genoa of South America.

It is built, like the Italian city, upon successive terraces, rising many hundred feet above the sea; it is in climate the counterpart of that of Italy, and has a large German, English, and Italian trade. In point of cleanliness, however, there is no comparison between the two cities; for in Genoa one finds everywhere, while Valparaiso is now one of the cleanest seaports in the world.

One of the most noticeable things on entering Valparaiso harbor is the tremendous military preparation to be seen on all sides. Fortifications and heavy armaments are upon all the hills, and are reminded that a magnificent library, a Catholic chapel, two fine restaurants and dance-halls, and a splendid theater. To crown all, every path and road and projection is in the night time lighted with electric lights. All in all this is one of the most delightful, pleasant and attractive places in the world.

From the base of this hill to the railway depot is the Alameda, or street of delights, a magnificent avenue, 610 feet wide and over four miles long, shaded by grand old forest trees and bordered by residences of all kinds, from the humble cabin to the splendid palace. The Alameda is bordered by the open squares, in which are many fine pieces of statuary, the most notable of which is a bronze equestrian statue of Gen. O'Higgins, the famous Chilean liberator.

Among the prominent buildings in Santiago are the Camera or Legislative chambers, the Public Library, the National University, and a large number of very fine churches, the mint is a very attractive building, and the city is entirely of copper, but in the war between Chile and Peru they were taken out and coined into money.

A singular fact in connection with this building is, that in sending out the plans for its erection from Spain, some 200 years ago, a mistake was made, and the plans for the mint in the city of Mexico were sent to Santiago, and those destined for the Chilean mint went to the former city. Before the mistake could be corrected by the means of communication of those days, both mints were under process of erection, and when the mistake was discovered, the Chilean mint was already under way, and had been begun. We therefore now see in Santiago the building intended for the City of Mexico.

I cannot close this description of Santiago without saying something of its citizens as well as of the people of Chile in general. First, it must be understood that Chile is a country of caste, where society follows certain rules, and where, to a certain extent, there is a nobility, where the controlling class is not nobles, but very wealthy, and, as we say here, "very select."

European manners prevail everywhere, and the middle and upper classes of Chile—in fact, above people, or serving class, fairly rival the Parisians of similar rank in the good taste and elegance of their dress. On the short railway journey from Santiago to Valparaiso, the gentlemen of the country invariably travel with extra baggage in a fine handbag, and with a cane, and the ladies with three—and I have sometimes counted as many as four—parasols, all finely encased in silver bags and carried by their servants.

The majority of Chilean ladies are of more than average size. They are tall, graceful and shapely in form to a remarkable degree. They are of the voluptuous and languorous type, with long, dark hair, and a fine, lively, and intelligent face. The face is oval, with finely cut mouth and glowing white teeth. Their noses—well, I can't describe a woman's nose, and will not try, but their eyes are lustrous and when they look straight at you out of their depths of gray or blue a thousand miles is as nothing, and the effect is delightfully thrilling.

The appearance in public with a true queenly bearing to the production of which the French modiste always contributes her full share. To them Paris is the only shrine of fashion, and they are apt pupils in all the latest fashionable eccentricities. Their dress is perfect and complete, with which they defend themselves against the assaults of time.

The men of Chile are men cavaliers. Even the humblest boy of the country is proud and with a natural grace which no amount of training could ever produce with our northern people. The working or labor class of the country are very temperate, and the dreadful effect of drunkenness is the first thing that impresses itself upon a visitor to the country, and is a matter of most universal comment. The working classes are fading away before it as the Indians were swept away by this country.

It is the death rate of the country is brought about by intemperance. There are times in every year during certain festivals that it is impossible for days together for employers of any description to get their laborers to do anything, solely on account of drunkenness. Public works lie idle for days because the laborers are all drunk, and as the servants are native, it is impossible to get any work done on Sunday, because everybody goes on a spree every Sunday night, and no one is expected to recover from it until Tuesday morning.

In this matter, among the lower classes the women are as bad as the men. I have walked through the streets of Valparaiso at 10 o'clock in the morning after the celebration of some national festival in commemoration of some battle, when it would almost seem as if the battle had just been fought over again, and the dead and the wounded were lying under my feet. I could count them in groups of tens and twenties, lying indiscriminately, men and women, drunk drunk, all over the ground.

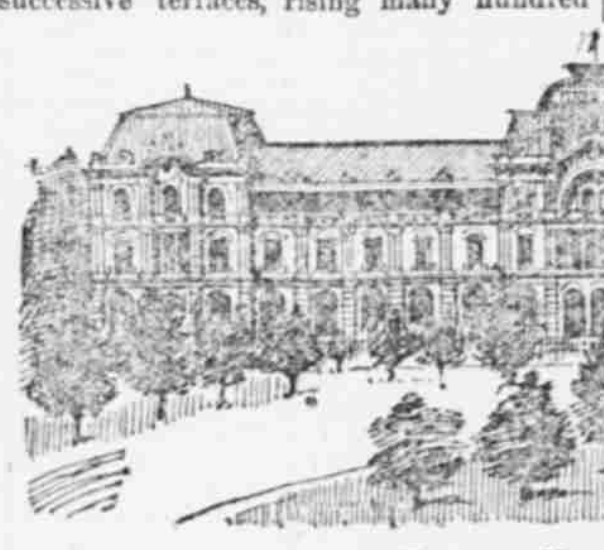
The educated class of Chile have some very curious ideas of life in its practical, everyday phases. They are, like all Spaniards, very proud and sensitive and amazingly envious and jealous, particularly of their country. I have seen many examples of their peculiarities in articles that I have read from time to time in the Spanish papers, many of them labored editorials attempting to show by statistics the enormous number of murders in this country, and arguing from such premises that there could not be the administration of justice, and that the country was a great mob, etc. They are always very particular, by the way, to style us the United States of North America, and they think we are guilty of the most unpardonable assault in calling ourselves the United States of America.

Another matter most frequently recalled to the minds of their readers by the journals, not only of Chile but of all South America, is what they call our conquest of Mexico. In all the school histories of Chile it is called that, and our war with Mexico is universally considered by the educated classes as an inexorable war for territory.

A few observations upon the learned professions of Chile may not be out of place. First, the law and the administration of justice. The legal profession is, to all appearances, next to the theological, the most favored. About every 50th man of the cultivated classes of the country glories in the title of "Abogado." Of course only a respectable minority of these

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There are some beautiful places of public resort in and near Santiago; for instance, Mañal, the beautiful farm of Madame Indora Cousin, nine miles out of Santiago, comprising about 3,000 acres in the highest state of cultivation. There is also the Quinta Normal, a fine farm in the center of the city, on which there is an agricultural college, a botanical garden, a zoological garden and a



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school of arts and trades. Altogether this farm contains about 150 acres, and is a sort of panoramic encyclopaedia of everything about the country. There is a fine, modern, beautiful hill, Santa Lucia, rising 700 feet from the level plain upon which the city is built, with huge banks of geraniums upon its sides, English ivy trained over its rocks and walls, and covered with beautiful statuary, flower-beds and grotesque, exquisite bits of sculpture, and pleasant paths.

Besides all these natural attractions there are upon this hill a fine swimming bath, a magnificent library, a Catholic chapel, two fine restaurants and dance-halls, and a splendid theater. To crown all, every path and road and projection is in the night time lighted with electric lights. All in all this is one of the most delightful, pleasant and attractive places in the world.

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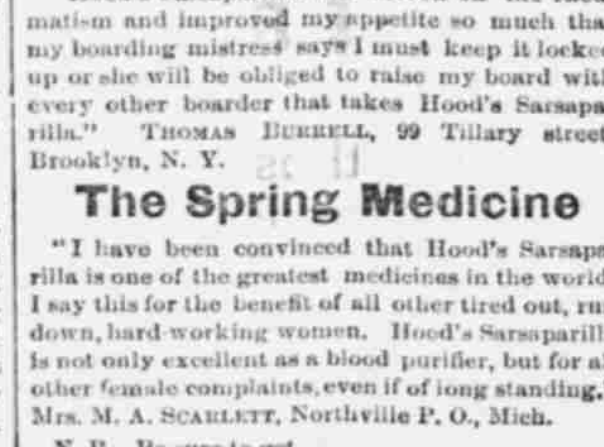
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CLEMENT CARPENTIER.

of a parade of all these fire companies, with bands of music, banners, etc. Fires are not as common as with us, for the reason that all buildings are of brick, stone or adobe; but about every month or so there will be a fire of importance enough to call out the entire department. These fire companies, who are the Chilean gentlemen on the streets in every direction, calling back and riding to the fire—a somewhat different way of getting to fires than is customary here.

There are some beautiful places of public resort in and near Santiago; for instance, Mañal, the beautiful farm of Madame Indora Cousin, nine miles out of Santiago, comprising about 3,000 acres in the highest state of cultivation. There is also the Quinta Normal, a fine farm in the center of the city, on which there is an agricultural college, a botanical garden, a zoological garden and a

school of arts and trades. Altogether this farm contains about 150 acres, and is a sort of panoramic encyclopaedia of everything about the country. There is a fine, modern, beautiful hill, Santa Lucia, rising 700 feet from the level plain upon which the city is built, with huge banks of geraniums upon its sides, English ivy trained over its rocks and walls, and covered with beautiful statuary, flower-beds and grotesque, exquisite bits of sculpture, and pleasant paths.

Besides all these natural attractions there are upon this hill a fine swimming bath, a magnificent library, a Catholic chapel, two fine restaurants and dance-halls, and a splendid theater. To crown all, every path and road and projection is in the night time lighted with electric lights. All in all this is one of the most delightful, pleasant and attractive places in the world.

From the base of this hill to the railway depot is the Alameda, or street of delights, a magnificent avenue, 610 feet wide and over four miles long, shaded by grand old forest trees and bordered by residences of all kinds, from the humble cabin to the splendid palace. The Alameda is bordered by the open squares, in which are many fine pieces of statuary, the most notable of which is a bronze equestrian statue of Gen. O'Higgins, the famous Chilean liberator.

Among the prominent buildings in Santiago are the Camera or Legislative chambers, the Public Library, the National University, and a large number of very fine churches, the mint is a very attractive building, and the city is entirely of copper, but in the war between Chile and Peru they were taken out and coined into money.

A singular fact in connection with this building is, that in sending out the plans for its erection from Spain, some 200 years ago, a mistake was made, and the plans for the mint in the city of Mexico were sent to Santiago, and those destined for the Chilean mint went to the former city. Before the mistake could be corrected by the means of communication of those days, both mints were under process of erection, and when the mistake was discovered, the Chilean mint was already under way, and had been begun. We therefore now see in Santiago the building intended for the City of Mexico.

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